



Mockingbird

SEVISALL66, VULGARMERCURY



He had done it again. Sirius had told himself that last Friday would be the final time - as he had done on countless other Fridays - but once again, he found himself stumbling out of the private members club, reeking of bourbon and sex, out onto the dimly lit side street. His weakness and inability to exercise even the smallest modicum of self-control irritated him, but nowhere near enough to stop him coming back again next week for more of the same.

He had discovered the club several months back, purely by accident. He had been drinking in a local boozer around the corner - alone as was often the case these days - and had nipped down the side street for a piss on his way back to the flat. If he hadn't been looking over his shoulder for

anyone trying to mug him at the time, he would never have noticed the unmarked door, painted black with polished gold furniture, that stood so awfully out of place in the dingy alleyway that was otherwise full of empty, shuttered retail units, long-abandoned, and drab-looking office blocks. With his curiosity taking over, he had gone over to investigate and found a plain brass plaque - only small - above an old-fashioned bell pull that stated simply 'The Brig'.

It had taken him three more weeks after that to grow the balls to actually ring that bell. Now, however, he was a regular client and they were on first name terms with him; they knew his requirements; what he drank and what he liked to stuff up his nose, the exact type of person he liked to partake in. Always ready and prepared for his arrival on a Friday evening, just like clockwork. It had become a dirty fucking habit.

Now, where the small tertiary street he was standing on intersected with the busy main road ahead of him, he could see throngs of bodies heaving along the pavement - weekend party goers; city bankers heading home after pulling a late shift on the Wharf; huddles of 'too cool for school' hipster teenagers clutching their vats of overpriced Starbucks; merry tourists taking in the sights and sounds of London at night. Then there was him - Sirius Black - struggling to hold himself upright, swaying on his feet, lurking like a vagrant in a filthy side road, blind-drunk and still moderately high, with absolutely nowhere to be.

His vision was blurred and his head spun as he moved in the direction of the main road; his depth perception rendered completely useless, he clattered into a cluster of putrid rubbish bins that sat on the corner, knocking them flying. *For fuck's sake!*

A group of young women, he guessed in their early twenties, who were queuing to get into a bar two doors along, saw him as he lurched forwards, stumbling over the detritus that was now scattered on the ground. One of them turned her stubbed nose up at him in disgust, the other three just sniggered and looked him up and down, like he was something quite nasty they had accidentally stepped in. They were the sort of women he would have probably chatted up, had he been capable - young, firm and full of hot air, so no danger of too much conversation. No difficult questions to navigate.

"The fuck are you looking at?" he slurred at them as he straightened himself up, kicking an old, sodden newspaper away from his feet.

"Not you mate, that's for sure!" the stubby-nosed one said in her rough, cockney twang. Her three companions guffawed at that, flipping their cheap blonde hair extensions over their shoulders.

Bitches!

But what they said made total sense - why indeed would they look at him? Did he even really *want* them to look at him anyway? He had just spent most of the evening in The Brig, hoovering up lines of Mandy chasing them with over-poured shots of Buffalo Trace, fucking the arse out of a pale, lanky bloke from Hungary called 'Sascha' - all the while, hating himself; wishing he was somewhere else. Wishing he was fucking someone else. He was, in short, a complete and utter mess. *Who knew my life would turn out like this? Jesus!*

Throwing the coven of peroxide-soaked crones a filthy look, he pulled himself up straight in a vain attempt to appear composed - and sober - and made his slow walk up the high road in the direction of the Underground station that would take him home. The air was damp and unusually humid for October, making his shirt stick to his back. The stickiness was not helped by the torrent of bodies milling up and down the pavement all around him. This godforsaken city was never quiet or still. He hated it.

As was usual, Tottenham Court Road Underground station was as heaving with people as the street was above it. The air in the Victorian tunnels was rank and stale; the stench of sweat and second-hand cigarette smoke suffocating him as he jostled his way to the turnstiles. Over the bustle of the crowd around him, he could hear the faint buzzing of the fluorescent strip lighting above his head, it's clinical white light hurting his eyes. It was a journey he made every weekend, so despite his current state of inebriation, his muscle-memory guided him through the steps; *Ticket; Escalator; Steps; Turn left, And left again; Platform; Wait*. He felt numb - but he knew that had nothing at all to do with the drink or the drugs.

This life he now led - if you could even call it a life - was slowly killing him. When Harry had moved out of Grimmauld Place two years ago, he felt like someone had died. As if he was in mourning. It was only in his absence that he realised how much life the boy had breathed into him; how much his presence masked his own pain. With Harry to care for; he was not forced to confront his own demons. But now...now there was nothing to shield him from them. No distractions; no peace and nowhere to hide.

Of course, he was happy for Harry. He was just like his father, whom he had loved so much. Ambitious; driven, charismatic. There was never any doubt that the boy would make a huge success of his life - and for that he was glad. Harry was an Auror now, as James was before him, and he was now living a good life in Italy with Ginny. They had even gone so far as to procreate, with Ginny about to drop their first child - something Sirius would never truly understand. *I can't even look after myself, let alone a bloody baby!*

His mind flashed back then to the day that he had taken the decision to renounce the magical world and everything in it. The day that he had snapped his wand in a fit of rage and threw the splintered fragments into the Thames. Sirius heard the words echo in his head of the vicious argument that had been the thing to lead him to stand precariously on the railings of Blackfriars Bridge that day. They were the viperous words of his lover; his best-kept secret. He remembered how the black, icy water had rolled and frothed beneath him; and how he had contemplated what it should feel like to drown in it.

Then came the image of him. His long and unsmiling face; pale and regal-looking with that delicious air of pompousness about it. His hard jaw and pointed features; his over-pronounced, aquiline nose that he loved so much. He could smell him - herbs and parchment - and hear the rich, unctuous tones of his voice that he had grown so used to hearing whispering in his ear. *Severus.*

But now, all he could hear were their voices as they spewed venom and rancour at each other; the bitter memory of their final confrontation; the gentleness Severus had once reserved only for him, slowly fading into the dismal black abyss of his mind.

"Get out - get out of my sight!"

"Sev, please. We can sort this. Stop being so fucking dramatic!"

"Dramatic? And this coming from you, Black! In case your dog-mind is forgetting - I am not the one who has just made a ridiculous declaration of love. And don't call me 'Sev'! It's so vulgar."

"Look - can we not just forget about it; pretend I didn't say anything at all? I don't want anything to change. Come here, please."

"EVERYTHING will change now - don't you see, you imbecile! You are fully aware of my feelings on the matter, and you have known it since...well..since we first embarked on our little arrangement. That was my one and only stipulation and I set it out clearly from the very beginning - no feelings. This was never about something as foolish as 'love'. This was purely a business transaction; a means to scratch one's itch if you like; and you should do well to remember that.

This is just typical of you, Sirius. Jumping in, feet first without thinking at all of the consequences. You are and always will be an impetuous idiot!"

"Yeah, well maybe I am a bit of a dickhead - but at least I can feel things, Severus! I am not a cold, empty prick like you!"

Before me, you were just a sad, lonely fuck who had no purpose left in this world other than to walk around with your morose face, hanging on to the past and fucking hurting people. Taking out your baggage on little kids because of your own failings and insecurities for fucks sake. That shit is twisted!"

"I said - get. out."

"Or what, Sev? Are you going to kill me too? Go on - get your fucking wand out then. Kill me! At least that would show me you had something going on in there. Some emotion towards me. Some soul."

"I am warning you. Get the fuck out, Black, before I say something I regret."

"Say it. I dare you - or do you not have the balls?"

"You know very well that my balls are precisely where they should be - and since you are feeling so bold, Sirius, I will tell you what you are so clearly desperate to hear."

"I want you to get out of my fucking bed and out of my rooms and out of my life! You have ruined everything with your recklessness and childish follies. This - whatever this is - cannot possibly continue now after this."

Everything, since that day, had turned to a depressing, pallid shade of grey. Faded and blurred around the edges. Navigating through this vacuous existence without him was almost too much to bear and he knew that the only thing that had prevented him from diving off of the railings that day, was the tiny glimmer of hope that he clutched to. The hope that he might be reunited with him one day. That he would forgive him.

He wasn't sorry for telling him he loved him - not one ounce. He deeply regretted, however, leaving without saying so much as a 'good day to you'. Always one for formalities, he knew that Severus would be incensed at that.

A vibration in his pocket shook him from his brooding, and the familiar clench of the ache in his gut loosened slightly as his focus shifted onto what had caused the interruption. Surprised that any decent signal could be achieved down there in the bowels of the city, he reluctantly pulled his mobile phone from the pocket of his jeans. Looking tentatively at the screen, squinting against the lights and trying to focus his drink and drug-addled eyes, he saw that it was as he had expected - Abby. *Bloody hell woman, six missed calls, really?*

He had met her not long after he moved into his bedsit. Flat 2a. The one situated above 'Featherstones Newsagents', run by the amiable but incessant meddler, Mr Johnson. The one with cracked windows and a constant draft, rising damp in the walls, black mould in every corner no

matter how hard he scrubbed at it and an ever present smell of decay. An absolute shithole, but the only shithole he could afford in this part of the city.

Abby was a nurse at St Thomas' Hospital - Paediatrics - and she also cared for his elderly neighbour who lived in the flat across the hall. He recalled the day he had, quite literally, bumped into her on the stairs, knocking the entire cup of coffee she had been carrying down the front of her uniform in the process. She had been very kind about it at the time but he could tell she was pissed off, so, out of some sense of gentlemanly duty, he invited her inside to dry off. She had, of course declined - in fact she had looked like she couldn't think of anything worse - and left rather abruptly, tutting and shaking her head as she went.

Several days later, however, she had knocked on his door brandishing a bottle of cheap-looking pink wine and a bar of Dairy Milk to apologise for being rude to him, which he thought was quite sweet of her. But, if he was truly honest with himself, he had actually completely forgotten she even existed by that point.

In the days and weeks that followed, she seemed to appear on their landing rather more often than before. There had been a few agonising 'small-talk' conversations in the stairwell; an invite to the pub; a couple of dinners and, in a horny moment of weakness, a drunken shag on his sofa and before he knew it, she was referring to herself as his girlfriend. He still wasn't quite sure if they had even had *that* conversation, but she kept turning up all the same - and she was nice after all - so he just went with it. And eight months later she was still there.

Part of him felt guilty about how he felt - or rather didn't feel - about Abby. She was a nice girl with a kind heart, the sort of woman every normal mother would want her son to marry, but there was nothing extraordinary about her. There was nothing about her that excited him or even interested him that much, and that he could do nothing to change. She wasn't who he wanted. She wasn't Severus.

He glanced down once again at the screen of his phone. Voicemail. Hitting the button, he raised it wearily to his ear and listened.

"Jake - why do you not ever pick up your phone? Where have you been anyway? I've been trying to call you all evening.

I just wanted to say please don't forget about lunch with my parents tomorrow. It's been eight months nearly and you know they are desperate to meet you.

I'll come by your flat and pick you up around 12:30, ok?

Call me back when you get this, alright ...I...love you."

Jake. Jake was the name he had assumed when he first moved to London. At the time, he thought it would have been easier to have a more 'muggle-sounding' name, but he had regretted it every day since, and every time he heard anyone call him by it, he had to fight the urge to punch them. *Fucking Jake!*

Abby had been banging on at him to meet her parents for months and had arranged this lunch weeks ago. They were supposed to meet them at some pretentious bistro in Holland Park - it was the kind of place that required a 'jacket'. He would rather die than keep that date tomorrow, but he was left with little choice. Abby was like a dog with a bone.

He knew he had to break it off with her sooner or later. He had been stringing her along for months - eight to be precise - but he was too far involved now for that ever to be an easy conversation and, quite frankly, he was a coward. It was far easier to just keep up the facade, avoid having sex with her as often as possible and get his own kicks at The Brig every Friday night. Much easier.

Letting out an exhausted sigh, he glanced up at the arrivals board suspended above the filthy platform. *'Train due in 1 minute'*.

Thank fuck for that!

Chapter 2

Chapter by [SevIsAll66](#)

“Well, we’ll see you soon then Abby, darling. Thank you so much for coming. It was wonderful to see you and to *finally* get to meet the elusive Jake.” gushed Abby’s mother, hugging her and glancing at him over her shoulder.

He couldn’t help but notice the slight cutting edge to her tone.

He shuffled slightly on his feet, awkward and desperate to escape. The lunch had been as he had expected. The restaurant was stuffy and overpriced and packed to the rafters with over-inflated egos and sycophantic hangers-on, lapping up every conceited word like a huge bowl of putrid narcissistic soup. It made him want to vomit. That and the fact that he had had to do away with his usual attire and don a suit. What a fucking muggle!

Abby’s parents were also as he had expected. Rich, privileged and full of their own self-importance. In the main, they had been pleasant to him, but he could see the disappointment in their faces - as much as they politely tried to conceal it - when he had told them that he worked in insurance and legal.

“Oh, which firm?” her father had asked, in a pompous, expectant voice, clearly waiting for him to reply with the likes of Lloyds of London or Goldman-Sachs. So, when he had sheepishly explained that his company, Laithwaites, was a small firm who dealt mainly with small injury claims, her father had quickly moved on to speaking loudly about their son-in-law Giles (*fucking Giles!*) who works in Canary Wharf don’t you know? The whole affair was utterly excruciating - but, thankfully, the end was here at last.

“Bye then Mummy and thank you for the lovely meal Daddy. We’ve really enjoyed it, haven’t we Jake?” He registered that Abby was talking to him.

“Yes. Great. Thank you Mr and Mrs Slade.” he said quickly, realising it was his turn to say something.

Get me the hell out of here, please!

“Good to meet you, Jake. Make sure you keep looking after our little Abby Dabby.” her father said, clapping him hard on the back of the shoulder. *Abby Dabby? Jesus Christ!*

“Good to meet you too. Thanks.” Sirius replied as pleasantly as he could, intentionally not responding to his comment about Abby. Internally, he shuddered at the very clear message being delivered there. “I am her dad and I am a ‘real’ man with a ‘real’ job, so don’t fuck this up, loser.”

His attention drifted then, as he vaguely heard Abby and her parents saying their final goodbyes, choosing instead to focus on the heavy stream of traffic running up and down Holland Park Avenue. He noticed the trendy couples walking in their trainers that probably cost more than a week’s rent on his flat; the private school children in their blazers and straw hats walking back to their ridiculously large homes along the mews; back to their privileged lives where they will never know what it is to struggle for anything. And finally his gaze fell upon a lonely homeless man leaning against a lamp post on the opposite side of the street. He surveyed him carefully, noticing the dirt on his face and the holes in the knees of his trousers and the polystyrene cup he held in his grubby, nicotine-stained hand.

That could be me. A sad, pathetic bastard, with no-one in the world.

“Jake...Jake! Are you listening to me?” he heard Abby say shrilly, as she shook his arm. “Mum and Dad have gone - shall we go back to mine?”

“Do you mind if I don’t today. I’ve got some stuff to do at the flat.” he lied through his teeth, hoping she wouldn’t press the matter.

“Alright. When will I get to see you again then?” she replied, a look of disappointment on her face.

“Er..I dunno. I’ll text you, alright?”

“Well, if you would just move in with me and get out of that cruddy flat you live in, this wouldn’t even be an issue.” she snapped. He could tell she was annoyed with him. She always wrinkled her nose and stuck out her bottom lip when she was angry, like a petulant toddler. He found it immensely irritating.

You’re a fucking coward, Sirius. Just tell her. Tell her you want to break things off.

But he didn’t tell her. Not even close. He simply brushed a hasty, dry kiss across her cheek and said his goodbyes, before turning away from her, setting off on his slow walk towards the Underground.

The remainder of the week fell away as every other week did. An endless cycle of drudgery; depressing commutes; unwanted pleasantries with his colleagues; and yet more missed calls and ear-bashings from Abby.

But, thank Merlin for small mercies, today was Friday. And Fridays always brought him something resembling happiness - if you could call it that - because of his weekly visit to The Brig. At least he would actually *feel* something tonight. He could distract himself from his own pitiful existence with whatever pleasant offering they had for him this time.

His work day dragged, as he knew it would. He must have glanced at the clock on the wall a hundred times, watching and waiting for it to be 6 o'clock. It had been an endless day of tedious phone calls and, worse than that, having to endure the incessant droning of Brian from Accounts and listening to the ins and outs of his extremely dull life. He had heard all about his recent fishing trip to Norfolk in minute detail and the full rundown of how his wife has entered a national knitting competition.

Kill me, just kill me!

When the hand on the clock finally clicked over on to the blessed number 6, he downed the dregs of his now tepid coffee, scooped up his bag and scurried out of the door, throwing a hasty 'see ya' over his shoulder in the general direction of Brian. Poor, sad Brian.

The sun was disappearing behind the numerous rows of tower blocks and office buildings, as he turned into the now familiar side street that was home to the club.

The last dregs of the autumn rays cast an orange glow on the usually leaden grey labyrinth of streets. He eyed the door to The Brig. It was the same as it always was - highly polished, shining and black, with its immaculate gold knocker and letterbox with nothing else to indicate the kind of establishment that lay within. After the week he had had, he was itching to get inside so did not hesitate to pull the antique bell-pull that hung invitingly beside the frame.

The door almost instantaneously swung open and he was greeted by Greta, the small European

hostess - likely German or Austrian - who always worked on Friday evenings. She was a young woman of around 20 with golden blonde hair and a fresh face, a spattering of freckles across her nose and cheeks, which made her look a lot younger than she was.

"We've got a new boy for you tonight Mr Black." She said, with a slight tone of amusement to her voice, "I warn you though, he's quite a bit older than your usual lot, and a feisty one at that."

"I see," he replied, intrigued.

It had been a long time since they had provided him with anyone other than simpering young things who, as much as he enjoyed them, didn't offer him any sort of challenge. So his interest was certainly piqued at the thought of meeting this new fellow Greta spoke of.

"Will you be wanting your usual 'refreshments' Mr Black?" she asked.

"Yes please, Greta love. And I'll settle my account as well before I leave later. I know I am a few weeks behind." he said, matter of factly.

Greta nodded in acknowledgment and proceeded to lead him down the dimly lit staircase, the walls of which were lined with black damask wallpaper and decorated with pieces of erotic art framed in gilt, gold candleabras dotted here and there, stubs of candles gently lighting their way down. Way down below the shabby, oblivious streets of London.

He followed her through into a room known as 'the parlour'. It was a large circular sitting room, lavishly furnished with pieces of antique furniture carved from exotic woods; upholstery of fine hand-sewn velvet in shades of dark maroon and forest green; the walls were hung with gigantic gilt-framed mirrors. Just right for observing oneself during the various proclivities that took place in this room. The parlour was a room reserved for those who preferred a more public and voyeuristic experience for their hard-earned coin, some of which were already otherwise engaged in various locations across the space.

"This way, Mr Black. We've got you in Room 10 tonight if that suits you?" Greta said, cheerily as she side-stepped, with complete indifference, past a group of four men in various stages of undress. As if she was simply passing by some people in the street.

"Fine." Sirius replied simply as he followed her down the narrow passage that led off the back of the parlour. He knew that this particular corridor housed the doors that led to the more exclusive,

private suites intended only for the high rollers and regulars.

Pausing outside the door to Room 10, while he waited for Greta to let him in, he felt the usual pang of anticipation and excitement he experienced whenever he came here. He was fully aware that this has turned into another one of his obsessions. He knew he was a terrible weakling; a feckless addict, constantly chasing the feeling of euphoria he got whenever he stood outside one of these doors and from whatever pleasures came after that.

"Enjoy your evening, Mr Black. And just press the buzzer if you need anything." Greta said, with a cheeky wink as she unlatched the door and allowed it to swing wide open, before wafting off and away back towards the parlour, leaving the scent of her cheap perfume hanging in the air behind her.

Sucking a deep breath into his lungs, Sirius stepped across the threshold and into the dimly lit room. He could just about see the features of the space, through the gloom. There was an opulently decorated sitting area with large antique chaise longue and walnut coffee table; a fully stocked bar area complete with a silver tray, already home to line upon pre-cut line of his chosen powder; and of course the enormous emperor-sized bed with its ornate carved headboard depicting erotic scenes from ancient history.

If he didn't know better, it could easily have passed for an exclusive hotel room rather than the den of iniquity that it, in fact, was. Only if you looked very closely and noticed the anchor points welded into the ceiling and the small wooden caddy of lube, condoms and other various sexual aids placed inconspicuously on the nightstand, would the true nature of this room be given away.

As he took in his surroundings, his senses suddenly prickled and he came to the realisation that he was not alone in this room after all.

Out of the corner of his eye, in the darkest corner of the room, he caught sight of a tiny, fluid movement; a soft crackle and the red glow of a lit cigarette being dragged upon, followed by a heady plume of smoke rising up towards the ceiling in a delicious cloud. He could hear its owner's breath exhale sharply as he purposefully blew away the last dregs of smoke from his mouth. He noticed a long pair of legs clad all in black, stretched out and crossed at the ankle in front of him, where he sat stiff and upright in one of the pair of wing-backed armchairs that sat like sentries, flanking either side of the bed.

Sirius' breath hitched in his throat as his eyes moved down and his sight fell upon the man's boots. He could see, through the low light, that they were leather or hide of some kind, with a thick heel and sharply pointed toe. Then he saw the distinctive silver buckle on one side, a curling snake with tiny green gems where the eyes should be. At that moment, he instantly knew the identity of his guest. He would recognise those boots anywhere.

Fuck! No, it cannot be.

Chapter 3

Chapter by [SevIsAll66](#)

"Well, well, well. Sirius Black." he heard the man speak from the gloom, his voice deep and unctuous in tone, with those oh so familiar long vowels and perfectly placed pauses, "Of all the sex clubs in all of London and of all the seedy little shits I could have been presented with this evening. They give me you!"

"Severus? What...what the fuck are you doing here?" Sirius replied, very aware that his voice sounded urgent and stuttering.

"I should imagine, for precisely the same reason you are here. You never were the brightest bulb in the box, were you?" Snape replied tartly, as he pulled another cigarette from the case in his breast pocket and pressed it to his lips, lighting the tip with a quick snap of his fingers. His expression remained, of course., completely unreadable.

"Still as acidic as ever I see. Nice to know nothing changes." Sirius said, relaxing a little. He always found the snarky side of Severus Snape incredibly attractive, "You seem disappointed to see me?"

Severus gruffed a little at this, blowing air out of his nose in indignation, along with a puff of his cigarette smoke.

"And how else should I feel, Black? We did not exactly part on amicable terms, did we? In fact, if I recall correctly, you decided to flounce off like a little bitch, without even saying goodbye. Most discourteous of you." he said.

"Oh, do you know what, fuck off Snape! You are such a pompous prick! The reason I left like that is because you *told* me to. You wanted me out of your life, so I left it. I didn't think you would expect a cordial goodbye from me." Sirius replied, feeling the blood rise in his cheeks.

Only Severus could make his rage bubble up like this. Most of the time he was the picture of indifference - numb and empty like the vacuum of space. But this man. This man made him truly feel. Even if the feelings were highly toxic and infinitely negative, more often than not.

"Speak to me like that again, Black. I dare you." Severus said dangerously, stubbing the last of his cigarette out on the sole of his boot and flicking the spent butt nonchalantly into the empty

fireplace.

Sirius felt something snap inside of him.

Who the fuck does he think he is? Striding arrogantly back into my world. The world I have built around me with the specific purpose to try and forget him. To regain something of myself after everything.

His heart hammered in his chest, thumping behind his ribcage like a bass drum as he fought the urge to smack the bastard right in the middle of his smug face.

“I wouldn’t give you the satisfaction. Fuck this, I’m going. They can find you someone else to fuck your hole tonight. Help yourself to coke and whiskey. It’s on me.” he snarled through his gritted teeth, barely holding on to his composure. “And to think I thought I loved you once. How *wrong* I was.”

He gave him one last side-eye and an exaggerated shake of his shaggy head, before turning towards the door and stretching out a rough, calloused hand for the handle. But before his fingers could even brush the surface of the brass, he felt a searing hot pain shoot into his back, between his shoulder blades and he immediately dropped to his knees, his body twisted in agony. It was a pain he had felt countless times before and one that he would never forget.

The fucking bastard set the cruciatus on me! Prick!

His vision was gone, his body a crumpled, whimpering heap by the door. But his many years of incarceration, as much as they had almost certainly destroyed parts of his soul, had also taught him the fine art of resistance and self control. He could definitely handle more than a little torture these days and, although he was rendered unable to move or speak, his senses remained sharp and he took his torture almost silently.

He was aware of Snape now standing over him, having now left his armchair, his hands outstretched as he cast the wordless spell and looked on ominously down at him from his towering height, despite the fact that he couldn’t focus on his features. The pain finally began to subside as he was released from the curse’s grip, leaving him sweating and panting to catch his breath. From his heap on the floor, he tilted his head up to look at his tormentor; his love.

In one swift movement, Severus swept down and placed a firm hand around Sirius’s throat,

squeezing that little bit too hard. His face only centimetres from his. Sirius could feel his hot breath feather-light on his cheek, and that familiar scent of herbs and parchment wafting deliciously under his nostrils, igniting the first flickerings of a fire in his belly once more. A fire long burnt out. *God, he smells so good.*

“Do not think for one moment that you will ever walk away from me again, Black!” the words rolled forth from his mouth like thunder, “That will be the last time you turn your back on me. Look at you, you are fucking pathetic. And it was always me who was supposed to be the weak one! I am disappointed.”

Sirius, now regaining some of his composure, slammed his fists hard into Severus’s chest, shoving him away from him before scrambling to his feet and lurching forward towards the snarling black figure in front of him. He gripped hold of the lapels of his jacket and slammed him backwards into the nearby wall, sending a vase and picture in a frame flying. The back of his head made contact with the oak bookshelf behind him with a dull thud and he automatically raised one pale hand to touch the back of his hair. As he drew it away again, Sirius noticed the dark smear of blood there, but paid no worry. *He fucking deserved that!*

“I hope that fucking hurt you ignorant arsehole! I mean, who the actual fuck do you think you are ay, Sev?” Sirius spat, “Don’t think you can just waltz back into my life and...”

It was then that he felt Severus’s hand reach around and grip a clutch of hair at the base of his neck - now sweating with rage and frustration - and pull his face into his, smashing into his mouth with a crushing kiss. His face felt cool and rough, where he needed to shave. His mouth was hot and urgent, his tongue wet and deliciously softened with his arousal as it pushed its way into his already open mouth.

“Shut up, Black! Just stop fucking talking for once.” Severus rasped breathlessly, as he pulled away for a moment.

Despite himself, Sirius let out a low, animalistic moan at the feel of Severus’s hands on him; at the way he hungrily kissed him, his teeth clamping down on his lower lip so hard it made him clench his fists. Something the bastard knew full well, drove him utterly mad! He could taste the metallic tang of his own blood seeping between his lips. This was the Severus he missed. The Severus he has been longing for for so long. Years of bitter anger and frustration and all the fear that had been swallowing him whole lately, gradually slipped away into nothing as he allowed himself to be engulfed by this man - as if they had never been apart.

Severus pulled Sirius’s body closer to his, pressing himself against him as if he wished to become part of his skin, part of his very soul. If only he knew that he already was - he always had been. His prick was hard, Sirius could feel it pressing into his leg through their clothes, the heat of him

penetrating every cell.

Severus was not a conventionally handsome man - in fact, many would probably consider him unpleasant to behold, with his pallid complexion, sharp and pointed features and unwelcoming demeanour. But Sirius had always thought him to be strikingly beautiful. There was something haunting and mysterious about him, like a fine work of art; his brokenness and his angst made him so deliciously vulnerable. It was all of it that made him even more desirable to Sirius. Even when they were teenagers; when, because of James, he had to make sure every day that everyone around them believed he hated him - even then, he secretly adored him. He secretly dreamed of fucking him just like he hoped they would tonight.

His hands desperately scrabbled for Severus's shirt opening, ripping them apart in his hurry sending a shower of shining pearl buttons scattering and bouncing off of the polished boards beneath their feet. He ran his hands over the familiar pale and scarred landscape of Snape's chest, lowering his mouth to the skin, tracing his tongue over his jutting collarbones and down over his nipples, hardened just ripe for biting. He had temporarily forgotten about the gleaming bar of metal he had through one of them, pierced and beautiful. *How could that one have slipped my mind?*

Sirius heard him gasp as he clamped his mouth down over it, gripping the cool steel between his teeth and tugging it away from him. Smears of the blood from his mouth left behind stood out in stark contrast to the deathly paleness of his skin.

"I knew you still wanted me, Severus." he breathed against his chest, placing soft kisses and tiny licks in the places he knew he liked the most, his hands rubbing over the length of his dick through his signature black trousers. "You never could get enough of me."

"I said - Don't. Fucking. Speak." Severus snarled, panting heavily resting his head back on the wall behind him. "Just put my cock in your mouth, mongrel, that will shut you up."

Sirius felt a bolt of lightning between his legs and a twisting in his guts at his lover's words. He didn't need to be asked twice to do that - he had been waiting for this moment for so long. This man was all he ever needed, he knew it. He just wished he would realise it too. It hurt more than he cared to admit that he felt so much for him - that twinned with the fact that he was never quite sure if any of it was reciprocated. Sure, they had always had great sex but Sirius knew his feeling ran far deeper than that. And the fact that Severus had always been so fucking indifferent about everything infuriated him. He gave so little away.

"You really are an arrogant fuck, you know that?" Sirius growled into his face, feeling Severus's hands clawing at his shirt, his breath hard and fast on his cheek. "What has happened to you since we parted anyway, to make you all bold and dominant all of a sudden, dear?"

Sirius slammed his forearm into Severus's neck, pinning him to the wall and with the other hand, tore down his fly, releasing him. His cock was so hard, head bulging and already glistening for him.

"I like it." he panted into his face.

Sirius had always been the dominant one out of the pair of them. A complete brat in fact. Snape had always preferred to be the fuckee rather than the fucker, so this behaviour was new. Something completely different and Sirius was quite surprised to find that he found it - quite frankly - hot as hell!

Sirius dropped to his knees in front of him, eyeing a sweet drip of pre-cum seeping out and down over his swollen end. He swirled his tongue around it and tasted its deliciousness in his mouth; he heard Snape suck in a sharp gulp of breath as he closed his lips around his cock, followed by a guttural rumble of pleasure from somewhere deep within him. Sirius was so aroused now, his own prick so hard it hurt.

Shit! He tastes so good.

"Mmm Black, your mouth is...uuh....so much more pleasant when it is silent. Especially when you do that." Severus breathed down at him. His hands found the back of Sirius's hair, fingers tangled into the mass of curls, as he held his head and gently pushed him towards him, thrusting his hips forward, desperate for more of his length to reach inside his throat.

Sirius hummed with pleasure as he slid his mouth down the full length of him, from tip to base, until he felt it thrust into the deep recesses of his throat. Hot and wet with saliva; softened lips caressing the entirety of Snape's shaft; in and out, over and over. His lover's moans sending electrical charges through his body.

He desperately wanted to continue; he wanted to suck him and lick him until he came right down his throat; to bleed him dry until he screamed out his name into the night - but that would be far too easy. So he abruptly stopped. He stopped and tilted his head up to look upon that pointed face that towered above him, leaving the glistening, throbbing cock bobbing obscenely in front of him.

Severus opened his eyes and let out an exasperated gruff of frustration.

“You didn’t think I would let you get off that easily did you, Sniv?” he said in a low voice, grinning up at him from the floor with a slightly feral twinkle in his eye.

He raised himself up from the floor, surveying the man in front of him. He looked dishevelled, sweat running down his chest and a light film glistening across his brow.

“You little shit, Black.”

“Hah! Yes - just how you have always liked me.” he retorted as he unbuttoned his own shirt and allowed it to drop to the floor. He noticed how Severus’s eyes flicked down over his chest hungrily.

“Have you missed me?” he quipped, cheekily as he sidled over to the bar and swiftly hoovered up two lines of white powder from the silver tray that sat there.

The drug burnt his nostrils, leaving an acrid taste of bitterness in the back of his throat. But the tingle in his veins soon followed, the blissful feeling of euphoria slowly spreading up from his toes to his scalp within seconds. A feeling that only fuelled his already burning heat for the man standing glaring, half naked and vulnerable where he had left him against the wall.

“I wish you wouldn’t use that shit.” Snape sneered in disgust. “It’s so common.”

“Oh loosen up and get your pale arse over here to me.” Sirius grinned from where he stood next to the chaise, brushing away the small deposit of powder left beneath his nostrils.

He watched as Severus attempted to correct his appearance - something rather difficult he imagined, as he was standing there half-dressed with his still erect cock hanging out like a mast. A small smile broke out at the corners of his mouth as he saw the man’s usual awkward twitchiness as he stalked across the room towards him. He really was a splendid sight.

“Talking of your arse, I think it’s high time I got a hold of it again, don’t you? It’s been so very long.” Sirius said, silkily before grabbing hold of the sides of Snape’s face and kissing him, sliding his tongue in between his lips, hot and wet. His tongue was met with his lover’s, swirling around each other, low groans of desire emitting from each of their mouths.

His loins thrummed in anticipation of him and he felt Severus’s bony hands with their long, delicate fingers pressing against his cock beneath the fabric of his trousers. He ground his body forward into him, desperate for some long-awaited friction.

“Fucking hell - I want you.” he breathed into Snapes ear.

Snape emitted a whimper that shot straight to his dick.

“Then take what you want. You always do.” Snape breathed in response.

Not breaking their embrace, Sirius pulled them both back towards the sitting area, before pulling away and discarding the remainder of his own clothes, leaving them in a sad, redundant heap on the floor.

He nodded down towards Snape, indicating that he should do the same. He swiftly obliged before positioning himself on the smooth velvet of the antique chaise longue.

“I want to fuck you in that sweet little hole of yours. I have missed it.” he said, as he leant down over Snape’s naked form, gripping hold of the base of his hardened cock and stroking it’s full length, stroking back and forth interspersing it with sharp squeezes of his bollocks, which he delighted in seeing made him throw his head back, raven hair wild, sharp intakes of breath, biting his lip hard.

“Please do it.” Snape whimpered like a wounded animal.

Sirius reached over to a nearby side table and retrieved a container of lube and coated his fingers in the cool, slick liquid before reaching down between Severus’s buttocks and thrusting one and then two fingers inside him. Stretching him; making ready. Still stroking his cock with his free hand, enjoying the rasps of breath, the smell of their sweat, the look of pleasure and pain on his lover’s face.

Snape let out a gasp - Sirius always was a little too rough.

“Fuck you mongrel!” he snarled at him, eyes closed.

“On the contrary my love, fuck *you* .” Sirius laughed, throwing his head back making his mass of chestnut waves, flecked with grey these days, fly out behind him. Continuing to pump his fingers in and out of his tight hole, the feeling as it loosened in readiness for him was making him even

harder than he already was. He curled his fingers up in the way that he knew would reach the most perfect spot inside him - and when he heard Snape cry out, he knew he had found it.

“Now turn the fuck over so I can get at you. I can’t wait any longer” he rasped, panting and trying desperately to control his own breath now. He withdrew his fingers and nudged Snape over onto all fours.

He reached down smearing another layer of lube over his cock - now throbbing painfully for him - and between Snape’s now beautifully parted arse cheeks, before pushing himself slowly slowly inside that sweet hole he had been waiting for for so long. *Oh Jesus!* Thrusting his entire length all the way in, up to the hilt, savouring the glorious warmth and tightness of the place.

He felt Severus pushing his hips back against him in desperation for more, animalistic groans and moans dripping deliciously from his open mouth.

“Fuck, you feel so good....mmmhmm.” he heard himself moan. “Let me see you wank yourself as I fuck you, dear.”

Like the good little bat that he was, he watched over Snape’s side as he obeyed and gripped his bulging cock, stroking it, hard and fast, as he slammed into him from behind with stroke after glorious stroke.

Crippling waves of fire surged through his body as he watched and listened to the noises he made, making his knees feel like they would buckle. He knew he would come soon - embarrassingly quickly - but no-one ignited him inside quite like Severus did. He looked upon the alabaster skin of his back as he fucked him; it was littered with welts and scars and his ribcage protruded obscenely through the skin. Each mark was like a reminder of the suffering the man had endured. Sirius hated himself for not being able to protect him from all of that.

His stroke intensified and he felt a heady clench of muscles in his belly and his balls contract up towards his body, sweat dripping down his back. Snape writhed and groaned beneath him and the sight of him pleasuring himself, bringing himself to the edge with his beautiful hand while Sirius plunged into him over and over was finally bringing him to his own unravelling.

“Shhhit...uh...I’m going to come, mongrel.” Sirius heard him gasp and he saw him bite down on the side of his hand.

Just in time, darling.

“Come for me then, and take that pretty hand away. I want to hear you.”

Snape cried out, breath hard and hot, his body twitched and shook as he spilled himself out in a series of glorious convulsions; hot white pearls pooling wet over the luxuriant maroon velvet of the chaise. The sight of this was enough to loosen Sirius’s already questionable grip on his own self-control; he allowed himself to let go and slammed himself deep inside that hot tunnel, releasing himself inside his lover with one final grunt and gasp of breath into his aching lungs. His own body tingling and twitching deliciously.

“I’ve missed you, you know.” Sirius whispered, breathlessly as he slumped gently forward placing a line of soft kisses in between Severus’s shoulder blades, before withdrawing from him and leaning wearily on the backrest.

“If you are expecting a display of emotion from me, Black, I am afraid you will be left disappointed.” Snape said breathlessly, as he stood up and performed a swift cleaning charm on himself, before pulling his trousers back on.

“I wouldn’t expect anything less from you - now, be a doll and clean this up for me will you?”

Sirius spied the faintest glimmer of a smile twitching at the corner of Snape’s mouth, as he gave a swift flick of his head and duly cleaned him up.

“You’re a cocky little shit - but I suppose I have missed you too.” Snape said quietly, not looking at him, but the smile he had been trying to suppress slowly spread across his face.

The steam from the kettle belched up into the tiny, neglected kitchen leaving a soggy mist on everything it touched. Sirius looked around at the room around him as he poured the water into the questionably clean mugs and, for the first time, he really took notice of the squalid place he had been living in; a feeling of something resembling embarrassment spread over him.

The ugly wallpaper was yellowing and peeling away from the walls where it met the ceiling; the tiles around the sink that had probably been there since the flat was constructed in the 1960’s were chipped and worn and clusters of mildew grew like moss around their edges. In fact, everything around him, now that he looked at it properly, was way past its best and had seen far, far better days.

Before now, none of it had bothered him or even crossed his mind. He hadn't cared one shit about the conditions he was living in because, quite frankly, he had no reason to.

But now that Severus Snape sat on his shabby, moth-eaten sofa in the next room, perched there like a raven on a buttress, all of a sudden he had been brought down to earth with an almighty crash. He had finally, after all this time, regained his purpose; his reason to continue; his reason to sort his sorry shit show of a life out.

It had been two whole blissful months since their reunion at The Brig. Eight weeks of stolen moments, back and forth weekend rendezvous, mind-blowing sex and a re-ignition of that old spark that had always burnt between them. He never wanted it to end.

Clutching the cups of tea with shaking fingers, he returned to the sitting room to see the man slouched back on his sofa, legs crossed, with one severe eyebrow raised, partially obscured by his black curtain of hair.

"Finally," he said, with his usual air of exasperation, "I thought you had gone somewhere to pick the leaves."

"Make it your fucking self next time then." Sirius retorted, placing the cup unceremoniously on the coffee table in front of him, its contents slopping over the side.

"That is...somewhat unlikely, dear - if nothing else, I would be afraid that I would catch some terrible disease in that fucking kitchen. It's disgusting, Black. Really. Why are you still living in this cess-pool anyway?" Severus said, with a look that was a mixture of revulsion and something else that might have been genuine concern. This surprised Sirius greatly.

Although Sirius was well aware that, despite the frosty and scowling exterior, Severus was a highly sensitive creature, he also knew that empathy was not one of his strong points.

"What choice do I have?" he snapped, the words sounding far harsher than he had intended, "This city is so damned expensive, I am lucky to be able to afford even this dump."

Severus's expression softened ever so slightly.

“Then come home with me...” he mumbled awkwardly into his lap, clearing his throat, the knuckles of his slender fingers white as he clung on to the handle of his mug.

Sirius felt something shift in his gut as he heard those words. It was all he had dreamed of hearing for so long, but now it was a reality he found himself hesitant. Anxious. Frightened of unbalancing what they had right now...of losing him again.

“You know I can’t just leave right now, Sev” he exhaled as he perched himself on the edge of the sofa next to him, pinching the bridge of his nose between his fingertips.

“Because of that woman?” Severus said, with a hint of a sneer to his voice.

Jealousy?

“No, for fuck’s sake, not because of Abby. I really couldn’t give a shit about her. I’ve told you already, it’s because I don’t know how to exist in that world any more, Sev. I abandoned it far too long ago; I have no wand; I have no friends or family and plenty of bloody enemies. I just don’t think I am made for the magical world any more.”

Sirius shuffled awkwardly as he took a slurp of his tea, not looking at Severus but sliding himself a little closer to him on the sofa. The thought crossed his mind to place a hand on his black-clad leg as they sat there silently contemplating their situation but, for some reason, he couldn’t bring himself to do it. For the first time in his life he was embarrassed, awkward even.

“Well, you know that I have to go back tonight...there is nothing I can do about it. I have to be back for the winter exams” Severus said, the darkness of his eyes finally meeting Sirius’s.

He hesitantly stretched out one pale hand and placed it over Sirius’s, stroking his thumb tenderly across the rough skin of his knuckles.

Sirius felt a shiver spread up his spine at the tenderness of his touch and the intense look in his black eyes. He had temporarily forgotten the effect this man had on him. Despite his morose outlook on life; despite his bitterness and his intense toxicity, he always managed to reduce him to a mess, drawing out all of Sirius’s vulnerabilities that he tried so desperately to bury.

The effort it took to continuously keep up the facade of someone confident and cock-sure was

exhausting. The merry dance he stepped daily was beginning to take its toll both physically and mentally and was clearly visible, should one take the time to look into his eyes. The spark that was once present there was a long-time dead. That is, until now. Until Severus came crashing back into his life like some beautiful meteor.

All he wanted to do now was to collapse into his arms; for him to nurture him and protect him; to tell him that everything was going to be alright. To do the same in return for him. As, in the cold light of day, the truth was that they were both broken and lost. Two tragic souls floating loose in the ether. Searching for something...anything that might make them whole again.

He loved him more than he cared to admit. He always had done.

"I know." Sirius muttered, feeling downcast and focusing a little bit too intently on their hands in his lap, "This...this thing...it's been really nice, you know."

He noticed Severus shift slightly in his seat. He looked so beautiful in the soft light of the lamps. His skin, usually so pallid and sickly in the daylight, looked like the finest ivory in this light and in the gentle glow made his sharp features take on a striking quality; like a marble sculpture in a museum.

"It has..." Severus replied simply, twisting his body around so that he was facing Sirius, his gaze hard and intense. His hand still rested on top of his, surprisingly warm and full of an affection so unlike him.

He leant in close, bringing his hand up to gently cup the side of Sirius's face and brushed his lips softly against his. The kiss was feather light; his breath was warm and smelt faintly of Earl Grey, raising goosebumps on Sirius's flesh.

God, I love him. Please stay with me. Stay with me forever.

"It's Saturday today so you don't need to teach tomorrow. You could stay for another night if you wanted to?" Sirius whispered, feeling the heat rise in his cheeks, very aware of not wanting to sound desperate.

"I can't. I really must get back." he replied, "And if you weren't so bastard stubborn, you could catch that train with me. You could get out of this place for good Sirius. You don't belong here and you know you don't!"

He quickly snatched his hand away and returned it to join its counterpart encircling his mug of tea, a waspish look twisting his features.

“Oh come on...don’t start sulking for fuck’s sake!”

“I do *not* sulk, Black! I just thought you would have grown out of your childishness by now. But I was clearly mistaken.” Severus spat like acid.

“Childish? Me? - I’m not the one who freaked out when he heard the words ‘I love you’ all those moons ago. If anyone has behaved like a child here, *darling*, it is you.” Sirius heard himself reply, his voice raising, irritated at the shift in mood.

“Oh, please don’t start that shit again, seriously. Don’t spoil all of this with your petulance. I really don’t have the energy right now.” Severus sneered. He raised himself from his seat, brushing invisible dirt from his trousers, before stalking over to the window.

Sirius surveyed the man and noticed the way he held himself as his back was turned. His usually poker-straight posture was hunched at the shoulders and the muscles of his back tensed awkwardly; an extra *steccato* to his gait. Almost as if he was in some pain. His breathing was also slightly laboured despite the lack of exertion and he could tell, even without seeing him, that his face was twisted into a grimace behind the drape of his hair.

What’s the matter with him?

“Severus, look at me.” he demanded

He did not turn or speak, but moved one shaking hand out to grasp the window sill to steady himself.

“For fuck’s sake Sev, will you just bloody well look at me! What’s wrong? Are you ill?” Sirius said more urgently now, his heart hammering.

Come to think of it, now that he really considered things, Severus hadn’t looked quite himself for weeks. Sirius happened to notice a change in his colouring a couple of visits ago and then there

were the sores on his usually immaculate hands. He also recalled him hinting, in one of their conversations, that he had been unwell with what he called 'repeated consumption' - chest infection to normal people - which, again, was not like Severus. In all the years he had known him, he couldn't remember him ever having even the slightest sniff of a head cold.

Sirius watched him closely as he turned to look at him, his face so much more gaunt and pale than usual and his eyes wracked with what could only be pain.

"I...I'm fine. Stop being dramatic. I'm just feeling a bit under the weather, that's all." he replied, unconvincingly, his voice carrying an uncharacteristic quake to it.

"Don't bullshit me *Snape*, I know you and I know something isn't right." Sirius pressed, "So just tell me for God's sake. I'm fucking worried about you, man."

Snape's expression darkened. Sirius knew what this meant. His walls were coming back up - the walls that had slowly crumbled over their past few months together, allowing Sirius unprecedented access to his heart. He had never liked talking about anything related to himself. Especially anything connected to physical or mental weakness. So, Sirius knew this conversation was going nowhere before it had even started.

"Will you just stop fussing - it doesn't suit you and I really haven't got the patience for any histrionics today Sirius." Severus gruffed at him from where he stood by the window. "Anyway, don't change the subject...I will ask you one final time and no more....are you going to get over yourself and come back with me or not?"

"Do you know what, fuck you Sev. I am sick of the way you talk down to me all the time. You're such a prick! I love you but I really don't like you right now." Sirius spat.

A dark look fell on Severus's face, like a storm rolling in across the ocean behind his eyes.

"Fine." was all he said, cold as ice, his black eyes dead.

He stepped away from the window and scooped up his cloak and travelling bag from where they rested on a nearby armchair. Giving Sirius one last stony look, he swept silently across the room like a spectre and out of the door, slamming it shut behind him.

The thud of the door made him startle and Sirius felt Severus's absence immediately. Like a piece of him had been amputated. Like a hole had been torn into his heart and lay there open, gaping and bleeding. The feeling of regret at his words engulfed him.

Severus, I'm sorry. Please come back to me.

Chapter 4

Chapter by [SevIsAll66](#)

Sirius glanced out of the rain-streaked window of the compartment as the train rumbled along through swathes of nondescript countryside. He had passed through cities and towns, farmland and marsh but the landscape had changed now. His throat tightened as he noticed the familiar hills and glens, dusted with purple heather, glowing in the last of the sun's light as dusk fell across the valley. He was close now. So close.

He thought of Severus then. Of how strangely he had been behaving recently. Due to the man's extreme and infuriating sense of propriety, it was highly unusual for him not to return a letter, no matter how pissed off he was. But Sirius hadn't heard from him in over a month - since their argument that day in his flat when he had looked so unwell - which gave him a sickening sense of foreboding. Something wasn't right.

Stubborn bastard is probably still sulking. Standard.

But just as he was deciding whether he was annoyed with him or not, he was shaken from his thoughts by the obnoxious buzzing of a text arriving on the mobile phone in his pocket; the muggle device that, up until now, he had entirely forgotten he still had in his possession.

His heart sank. He knew exactly what he would see when he looked at the screen.

Abby: 'How could you do this to me Jake? You have completely broken my heart. I hope you are satisfied.'

He wasn't proud of how he had left things with Abby. She was a nice girl and did not deserve the treatment she had received from him. The empty flat; the absence of any trace of him except the hurried note left on the kitchen table telling her that he had left her.

He let out a weary sigh as he clicked the phone closed and tucked it back inside his pocket, his thoughts drifting away from Abby and once more to Severus.

It had taken him about 4 seconds, after watching that dark silhouette disappear around the door of his flat, to decide that he had to follow him back to Hogwarts. He knew he couldn't face this world without him in it. He absolutely couldn't lose him again and felt pissed off with himself for acting like he did when they last spoke.

Now, two weeks later, now that his affairs were all in order and he had finally worked out his cowardly way to break the news to Abby that he was leaving, he was on his way. Almost back to the only place he had ever been able to truly call home. Back to him.

The screech of the train's brakes slamming on shook him into the present. He noticed that darkness had fallen outside now and a distant rumble of thunder vibrated through the carriage as the train slowed as it neared the station. The distant sky held an ominous purple hue and he could see a thick rolling blanket of storm clouds moving over the hills. The Gods were angry tonight and an intense feeling of foreboding spread through him. He couldn't quite put his finger on why, but it was there all the same.

Sucking in a deep breath, he began to gather up his things, his heart hammering inside his chest.

Time to face the music Sirius.

The heels of his boots clacked loudly in the silent darkness as he ascended the steps at the front of the castle, a solid lump now firmly lodged in his throat. He knew he shouldn't be here. He was risking everything just by showing his face here, but the draw of Severus was too much to stay away. He had to see him. He had to fix this.

It was way past supper time, so he knew that there wouldn't be many students milling about now, although he noticed the torches were still lit in the Great Hall. Their warm glow emanated from the high leaded windows, casting long shadows on the lawn outside below and he imagined the scene inside. Fond memories of the many mealtimes he had spent in that Hall filled his mind. The hubbub of chattering children, carefree and high on life; the delicious smells of roast chicken and hot apple pie; the friendly warmth of the only 'family' he had ever known, wrapping him in a blanket of security.

As he reached the top of the steps and placed his hands against the rough wood of the door, he paused for a second; he stopped in his tracks to settle his nerves and calm his hammering heart.

This was the first time he had stepped inside this hulk of a building for so many years and he wasn't sure that he was entirely ready to face the ghosts of his past just yet. But it was too late to turn back now so he shoved hard against the door and stepped inside, into the cavernous entrance hall.

It was dimly lit in readiness for lights-out and completely deserted. The smell of tallow from the recently snuffed candles still hung in the air and the occupants of the many paintings that lined the high walls whispered behind their hands to each other about his presence.

“Look, look Mildred...it’s that handsome chap from the cinefilms....”

“No no it’s not, you silly old bag. He’s too skinny and his eyes are the wrong colour.”

“Will you two pipe down, he will hear you!”

“Yes, shhhh. I’m trying to sleep over here.”

“That’s no cinefilm star....that’s Siri....”

“Sirius Black!”

“Sirius Black?”

“Yes, it is. It’s him I tell you!”

Sirius struggled to hide his smirk as he listened to the titterings and sideways glances from the paintings. *Nothing much changes with them then. Still a bunch of gossiping old hens.*

Shaking his head, he turned to make his way to the place he knew he would find Severus, quietly stepping towards the ancient set of mildew-covered steps that lead down to the deep underbelly of the castle where Snape’s dungeons lay. He might be in bed already, but this couldn’t wait until morning. It was tough shit if he was pissed off with the intrusion.

His heart hammered in his chest as he descended the steps, every footstep echoing around him, and as he reached the bottom he could feel his irritation at Snape’s ignorance bubbling up inside him. *How could he just swoop back into my life, like the fucking slimy bat he is, and then swoop back out without a word. The very thing he chastised me for. Bastard!*

He was just psyching himself up for a good row as he rounded the corner to the corridor home to Snape's classroom and chambers when he clattered face first into a dark cloaked figure rushing back up the other way towards the steps.

"Oof!" he huffed as he brushed himself off, straightening his jacket.

"What the...will you watch yourself....who...who is that down here at this hour?" he heard the unmistakable Scottish twang of Minerva McGonagall. She sounded flustered and off-balance. Quite unlike the Minerva he once knew.

She flicked her wand towards a nearby torch, immediately igniting the wick casting an orange glow along the dank corridor. The light fell across Sirius's face and he saw her blue-green eyes widen at the sight of him.

"Sirius Black? Wha...why...what are you doing here?" her voice quavered as she stuttered the question. "In actual fact, don't answer that. You need to leave - now! You can't be here."

"Good to see you too Minnie" Severus grinned in the darkness, his eyes sparkling in the torchlight, dark curls hanging about his cheeks.

"I am not joking, Sirius. You need to get out of here immediately." Minerva snapped, "and don't call me Minnie, for goodness sake!"

Her urgency alarmed him. He knew his unannounced arrival would be a surprise to anyone he happened to encounter, but he hadn't anticipated this frost from Minerva of all people. She and him always had quite an accord, back in the day.

"What's flown up your nose *Minerva*?" he asked, emphasising her full name in a facetious tone that he knew full well would annoy her

"This is *not* the time for your larking, Sirius. I wouldn't say this if it wasn't vital. You really must leave. Please don't argue." she said, almost pleading.

"Sorry, but I'm not going anywhere until you tell me what the hell is going on." Sirius said, a sick feeling of worry forming in his throat now, "Where is he? Where's Severus?"

He watched her closely as her shoulders visibly slumped forward at his question. She turned her face away from him and sucked a deep breath into her lungs, focusing on something on the wall to the side of her. Anything rather than look him in the eyes.

“Minerva, you’re scaring me now. I’ll ask you again - what is going on and where is Severus? Look at me, please. Tell me!” Sirius was raising his voice now, in his urgency.

She slowly turned to face him and he could see her eyes were wet with tears, dark circles hung below them. Evidence of many nights of little sleep and plenty of tears he supposed.

“Oh Sirius, why did you come here? He doesn’t want you to see him like this.” Minerva choked out the words in between great, wracking sobs. Her whole body convulsing with sadness.

“Wh..what do you mean?” Sirius felt sick and as the question left his lips, he knew immediately that he didn’t want to know the answer.

Minerva pulled out a handkerchief from her sleeve and swiped away the tears from her cheeks.

“I...he...Severus...” she stammered

“Yes?”

The pain in her eyes and in her voice as she spoke these whispered words in the darkness was palpable. She and Severus had always shared a very special relationship for all his adult life and Sirius knew that she regarded him like her own son; she loved him just as much.

“Severus is gravely ill. He has been trying to hide it from all of us for months now, but especially from you because...well...it’s *you*. That is why he hasn’t answered any of your letters. It is why he wanted you to come back here with him before. ” she blurted out,

“But now the sickness is too far along to conceal any longer. He is bound to his bed now. He is dying, Sirius.”

Chapter 5

Chapter by [SevIsAll66](#)

Sirius felt the intense burn of bile rising in his throat; his knees felt like they would buckle beneath him and the blood rushing in his ears deafened him. He was aware of Minerva standing in front of him with her arms outstretched. He knew she was speaking but he couldn't hear the words.

He felt as if the bottom was dropping out of his world and he was powerless to stop it.

Dying? Not Severus...please not him.

"Sirius...Sirius...." Minerva's voice suddenly came back up to normal volume in his ears, "Did you hear what I said?"

"I...wh...what's wrong with him?" He stammered, placing one sweaty palm against the wall of the dungeon to steady himself, unable to string more words together despite the thousand questions he had swimming about in his brain.

"That's the thing....we're not entirely sure. Poppy has been taking excellent care of him, but no spell can touch whatever it is." Minerva replied, gravely.

"There must be *something* that can be done, Minerva, for fuck's sake! Hogwarts is stuffed full of some of the best witches and wizards on this bloody rock we live on and you are telling me that there is nothing to be done! Bullshit!" Sirius raged, his shock now morphing into white-hot anger. Fury, in fact.

Fury at the unfairness of it, fury at himself for behaving the way he had when he last saw him; for not saying all the things he was now so desperate to say and fury at Severus himself for concealing this from him.

Minerva reached for him then and placed a hand on each shoulder, squeezing gently. Her eyes searched for his, and he saw the old familiar gentleness behind them that he had grown to know over the years. She had always looked out for him, for all of them. Even when they hadn't deserved it at all.

“I can assure you, Sirius, we have tried absolutely everything but it has all been futile. Severus’s immune system appears to be shutting down, his organs failing...the sickness has weakened him too much now; it is taking him. All we can do now is make sure he is as comfortable as he can be.” Minerva explained, her voice thick with emotion and the threat of yet more tears in her eyes.

His earlier anger began to dissolve then and felt himself falling forwards into Minerva’s now open arms, allowing her to embrace him, holding him like a wounded child. His sobs came then in huge, wretched gulps and he buried his head in the small woman’s shoulder.

“Oh my God, Minerva. What the hell am I going to do without him?” he cried, hot salty tears pouring down his cheeks, “I...I...you must know that we...”

“Shh now. I know Sirius. He told me everything already. About the two of you.” she spoke softly next to his ear. “You don’t need to explain anything. Nothing at all.”

“I..I need to see him - can I go to him now?” Sirius choked out.

“Of course - but you need to be prepared for what you will see. He is not how you remember him, my dear.” she said, as she released him from her embrace, holding him at arm's length.

“I wouldn’t care if his very flesh was hanging from his bones, Minerva. I need to see him. Now. Please.”

Minerva said nothing, but simply nodded and turned, leading the way down the darkened corridor to the bedchamber he knew belonged to Severus.

Sirius’s breath caught in his throat as he stepped through the door into the bedroom and his eyes fell on the emaciated form of his love, laying on top of the bedclothes.

He was deathly pale and a thin film of sweat made his bare chest glisten in the flickering light of the few candles that were dotted here and there. His skin had taken on a sickly grey hue; bones jutting against it from the inside; dark purple circles resided beneath his eyes and his breath was shallow and erratic.

From the bruises on his arms, he could see that Poppy had been bloodletting recently, the angry remnants of where the leeches had been stood out in stark contrast against his pallid skin.

My God! My darling, look at you.

“I’ll leave you alone with him.” Minerva whispered, from the doorway, “But I won’t be far if you need me for anything, OK?”

“Thank you.” he nodded, as he moved over to the side of the bed, dropping to his knees beside him.

He heard the door click shut behind him and Minerva’s footsteps disappearing up the hall as she left.

He took one of Severus’s hands gently in his and stroked his thumb tenderly across the back of his palm. It felt cold and clammy. He saw that the sores he had noticed before were still present, but now in abundance, some looked weeping and infected.

“Oh my love, my darling Severus.” he whispered through the tears that were now flowing freely again down his rough cheeks and into the dark hair of his beard, “I’m so sorry that you have been fighting this alone. I’m sorry I wasn’t here.”

Leaning up over him, he brushed a soft kiss on his forehead - not once releasing his hand from his gentle grip.

“I don’t care if you hate me for this, but if you can hear me, know that I love you. I love you more than the air that I breathe.” he whispered close to his ear and immediately felt him stir. The most miniscule movement and a slight change in the pattern of his breathing, but it was there all the same.

Did he hear me?

“Severus? If you can hear me, please open your eyes, squeeze my hand...something” Sirius pleaded, his voice thick with sadness, desperate for a look at those obsidian eyes that he loved so much - even if it was to be for the last time.

But, deep down, he knew that the withered shell of the man he once knew who lay dying on the bed before him was too weak to open his eyes. He knew he would never see that arrogant eyebrow raise at him in disgust again; he would no more hear his many cutting remarks and viperous tongue spit acid at him or call him a 'filthy mongrel' - a nickname that he had once loathed, but now he would saw his own arm off to hear him speak it again; and never again would he feel his cool hands on his naked body, caressing him with an uncharacteristic gentleness that Severus reserved only for him.

His heart felt like it had been ripped out and stamped on. Broken into a thousand miserable pieces.

It was then that he felt it.

The faintest twitch of his fingers, still enveloped in his own.

"Sev...Severus can you hear me? If you can hear me, do that again." Sirius said, urgently, studying his face for even the slightest sign that he was aware of his presence.

There it was again. A tiny movement.

He can! He can hear me. He knows I'm here.

"I'm here my love and you are safe. I'm so sorry for everything...I..I should have come back here with you that day. I should have been here for you. God damn you Severus, please don't fucking leave me! I love you. I need you." Sirius sobbed as he crouched down next to the bed, devastated and desperate, "but I know you can't hang on my darling...this sickness has taken you now. So I want you to know that I will find you in the next life. In the next thousand lives. Wherever you go...I will be there."

Severus's breathing shifted then. A sickening rattle grumbled from inside his chest, irregular and laboured, in and out.

Sirius's head snapped up.

No. No. Please, no.

He watched helplessly as Severus's breaths became fewer and fewer, until finally after what felt like an age, he sucked in one long gasp and then silence. A silence so loud it was deafening.

Sirius looked at his face. Pale and lifeless. He knew then that he was gone. The beautiful, complicated, broken soul that was Severus Snape was dead.

His sobs came then in great waves, howling and wild like an animal, reverberating around the chamber and he clung to his body, like a clam stuck to a rock, unable to let go. Unable to accept what had just happened.

"Why?!" he screamed into the night, "Why him?"

How can I possibly go on now? How can I even contemplate navigating this world without him?

When, finally, there was a break in his tears, Sirius stood up, sniffing, and swept the arm of his jacket across his face to wipe away the wetness. He felt lost and hollow. Hopeless.

His eyes fell then, on the high shelves that lined the wall of Severus's bedchamber stuffed full of jars and bottles containing all manner of ingredients and powders he used for potion making. He smiled as he remembered watching him, back when they were at school, pouring over books and practicing the same recipe over and over until he got it absolutely perfect.

Typical Severus. Ordered, proper, perfect.

His gaze ran over the neat little labels, carefully written in Severus's curled, cursive hand:

Sleeping Draught

Asphodel Root

Billywig Wings

Dittany

Dragon's Blood

Gillyweed

Death-cap Draught

He paused. His mind racing.

Death-cap Draught...Poison.

He reached for the glass vial and took it carefully between his fingers, eyeing the dark red coloured murky liquid inside as it swirled and bubbled as he agitated the vessel. He knew that although the vial was only half- full, there was enough of the potion there to kill a fully grown cave troll stone dead.

He knew now what he needed to do.

Spotting a scrap of parchment and a quill on a nearby table, he quickly but carefully scratched a note and folded it, leaving it where he had found it. On the outside he wrote simply:

'For Minerva'

Sucking in a deep breath and still grasping the vial, he silently stepped back over to the bed and bent low over Severus's face, softly kissing his lifeless lips, running a finger gently down one of his cheeks.

"Goodnight my love. See you soon." he whispered simply, his voice coming forth in a gravelly rasp.

Then, without any hesitation, he flicked the cork out from the top of the vial, raised it to his lips and tipped its entire contents into his mouth, swallowing it down, making sure to drain every last drop.

Within seconds, the room became distorted and he could not feel his legs. He slumped down next to the bed, unable to hold himself upright as the effects of the poison took hold.

The last thing he remembered was taking Severus's cool hand in his once more, before everything blurred around the edges....before everything faded to black. An abyss of sweet, blessed darkness

with no more pain and no more suffering.

Now they could fly, now they were free.

Epilogue

Chapter by [SevIsAll66](#)

Minerva's hands trembled as she raised herself from her seat and made her slow and measured walk to the lectern at the front of the room, clutching on to the crumpled note that she had been guarding for the past week. The week that had passed since they died.

A sea of faces were upturned towards her, expectant, waiting for her speech.

She felt sick as she prepared herself to speak. She had lost many people who were dear to her during her long years, but none of those deaths had hit her quite as hard as the deaths of these two tragic souls. Bound to each other, destined for tragedy.

Her eyes fell upon the two identical ebony caskets that stood like a pair of macabre bookends at either side of her and felt a sickening twist in her gut.

Poor sweet boys.

Gathering her thoughts, she cleared her throat and spoke.

"So, for the first time in my life, words fail me. There are no words that I could possibly say today to express my grief at the loss of these two great men, whom I have known for most of their lives. So I will not discredit them by attempting to.

I will simply read this note to you all what was left to me by Sirius before he...before he died. It will explain what you are all wondering, I am sure."

She carefully opened the parchment in her hand and read:

"My dearest Minerva,

Please don't be angry when you find us and read this note. There is simply no other way than this. Severus was and always will be my reason for living, so without him I cannot possibly

continue.

I do not wish you to say anything about me - there is nothing at all to say - but I hope you will read what I am about to write about him to anyone who will listen, because he deserves it. He deserves everything.

Severus was my everything. He was a deeply fragile and sensitive soul who buried his own insecurities and self-loathing beneath a shield of ice and cold, but beneath it all, for all his dark and broken parts, he was gentle and kind and the most loyal human being you could ever have the pleasure to know. He simply needed someone to nurture him, to look after him. To care.

And I was fortunate enough to be allowed to love him.

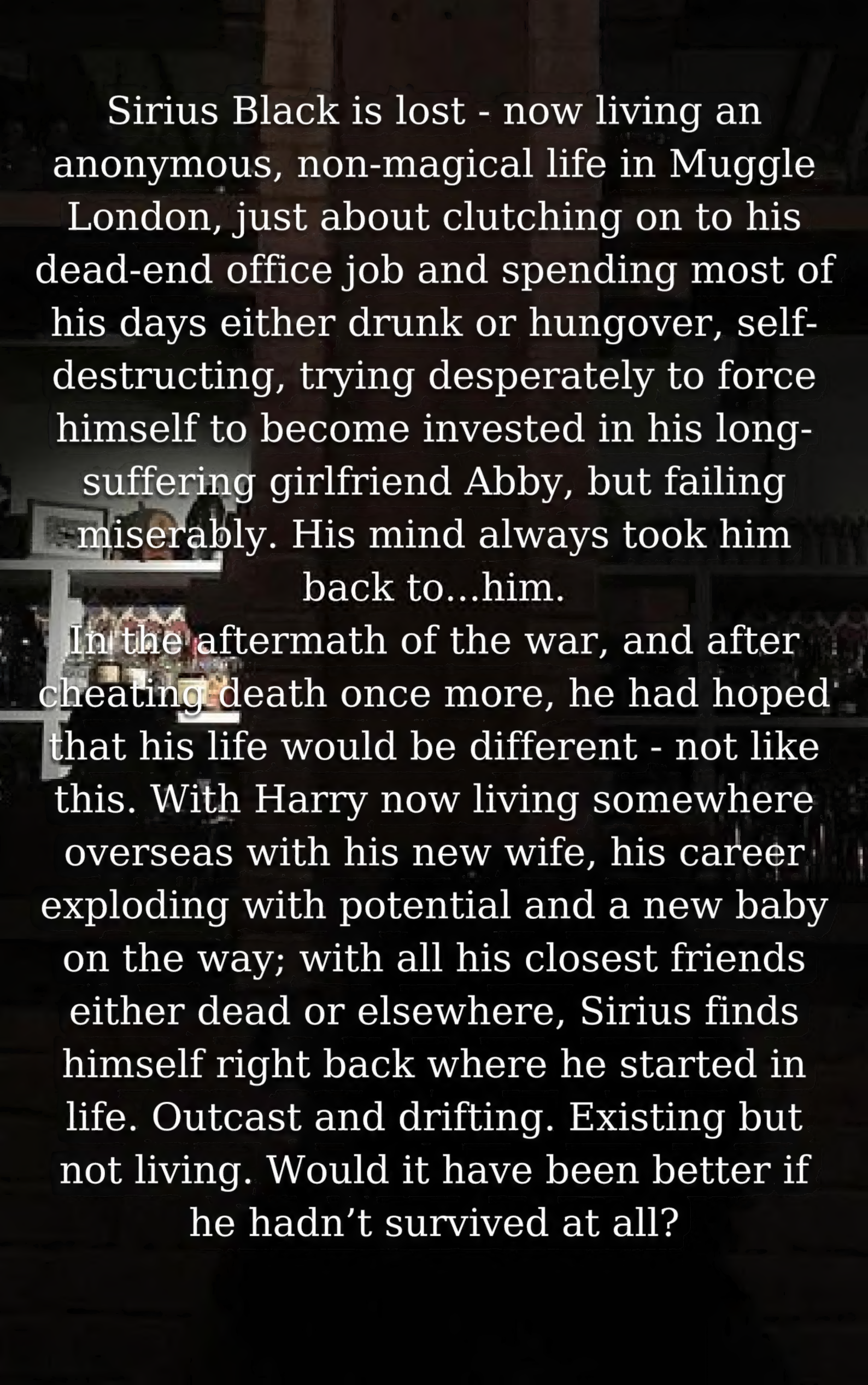
So wherever this glorious journey of death shall take us, wherever we end up in the next life, one thing is for certain, I will always be thankful for Severus Snape."

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Hey yall! VulgarMercury here, I hope you enjoyed this collab. Here's the final illustration I created for Sev's fic. It was such a honor to create and I had a lot of fun working with her. Thanks for checking out this fic and my art!

Artwork to accompany the final scene.



Sirius Black is lost - now living an anonymous, non-magical life in Muggle London, just about clutching on to his dead-end office job and spending most of his days either drunk or hungover, self-destructing, trying desperately to force himself to become invested in his long-suffering girlfriend Abby, but failing miserably. His mind always took him back to...him.

In the aftermath of the war, and after cheating death once more, he had hoped that his life would be different - not like this. With Harry now living somewhere overseas with his new wife, his career exploding with potential and a new baby on the way; with all his closest friends either dead or elsewhere, Sirius finds himself right back where he started in life. Outcast and drifting. Existing but not living. Would it have been better if he hadn't survived at all?